



Section 6: VITA Communications and Culture

VITA undertook an extensive and comprehensive communications effort that is virtually unprecedented at any level of government. In addition to providing stakeholders with current, accurate information about the VITA transition effort, VITA built the foundation for its culture and began embedding that culture into the newly formed organization.

Approach

The VITA Transition Office established a Communications and Culture Transition Team comprised of representatives from five agencies. The purpose of the Team was to develop a communications strategy, organize communications and recognition events, create the Web presence for VITA and the transition effort, develop the VITA logo and “brand,” and develop and implement an extensive “on-boarding” process for new VITA employees. The overarching mission was to ensure quality, ongoing communications with stakeholders while building anticipation for the creation of VITA. Because VITA evolves over an 18-month time-frame, with a consistent flow of agencies coming on board, the approach to the communications effort can be characterized as “the long drum roll.”

Principles

VITA adhered to a number of guiding principles in communications and culture-building, including:

- **Put people first.** Recognizing people—particularly future employees—are our number one asset, VITA communicated new information about the VITA transition effort as soon as it became known and solidified. Furthermore, VITA sought input from its stakeholders and encouraged a two-way dialogue.
- **Communicate frequently in a variety of formats.** VITA followed best practice for comprehensive communications campaigns and provided information in a variety of formats and venues, including individual contacts, Town Hall sessions, letters and memos, electronic mail, a strong Web presence, and small groups.
- **Ensure stakeholder participation and dialogue.** VITA sought feedback and input throughout the transition process, by involving other agencies in the planning process, planning specific events (like the Employee Town Hall sessions) to gather stakeholder input, and providing mechanisms (such as the ContactUS@vita.virginia.gov e-mail address) to receive questions and suggestions.
- **Help make the transition as seamless and smooth as possible.** The VITA transition involves significant organizational and cultural change and transformation. VITA was concerned most immediately with ensuring business continuity for its customers and providing a positive experience for its employees transitioning into the organization.
- **Promote immediacy and urgency of needed cultural transformation.** The scope of the consolidation effort calls for a major cultural revolution in state government in terms of how we think about information technology (enterprise management vs. agency-by-agency management), how we serve our customers, and how employees perform their jobs. During times of significant change, it is tempting to cling to the old way of doing things and not champion the new way of doing things.

Objectives:

The primary purposes of the Communications and Culture effort are:

- Communicate the shift from a stove-piped, decentralized model of IT management to an enterprise focus.
- Build a sense of shared responsibility and accountability for success of the initiative among stakeholders.
- Communicate VITA's early successes to its many stakeholders, including other states following Virginia's lead in the area of consolidation.

Accomplishments

Events

Sharing information with stakeholders began even before the legislation creating VITA was drafted and enacted. In its commitment to employees, agency heads and their management teams, and other stakeholders, VITA and the Office of the Secretary of Technology hosted a number of events including:

December 2002 Town Halls with IT employees

During the first two weeks of December, Secretary Newstrom unveiled the Governor's vision for IT in the Commonwealth and discussed in detail plans for consolidating IT functions and services throughout Virginia. Approximately 925 employees attended the sessions, accommodating audio- and video-conferencing from remote locations throughout the Commonwealth.

May 5, 2003, Agency Head Meeting

With members of the Legislature and technology community on hand, Governor Warner signed into law the legislation creating VITA. Top officials provided information on the specifics of the bill and the initial strategy for initiating the consolidation effort, and sought the cooperation and assistance of all Executive branch agency heads.

May 19, 2003, AITR meeting

Secretary Newstrom and key VITA Transition staff met with approximately 60 Agency IT Resource (AITR) personnel to provide an update on VITA activities, explore the role of the AITR in depth, and to answer questions and receive suggestions.

June 9-12, 2003 Town Hall Sessions

Secretary Newstrom and VITA Transition Staff hosted a series of Town Hall sessions for approximately 275 AITRs, agency heads, HR directors, and IT directors of in-scope agencies to VITA. Highlights of the sessions included an open question-and-answer session (See Appendix 6-1 for questions and their answers) and an update on consolidation activities.

July 8, 2003, VITA Kickoff and Employee Recognition Event at Kanawha Plaza.

With more than 400 stakeholders in attendance, the VITA Kickoff and Employee Recognition Event marked the birthday of the new agency and provided a forum for recognizing state IT employees. Keynote speakers included Governor Warner, Senator Walter Stosch, Senator Janet Howell, Delegate Sam Nixon, Delegate Joe May, Secretary Newstrom, and Cathilea Robinett. Ms. Robinett is the Executive Director of the Center for Digital Government and remarked on the keen national and international interest in the technology transformation under way in Virginia.

Governor Warner and VITA presented its first Partner Awards, including:

- **Teamwork Award.** One of the hallmarks of VITA is the notion of “disciplined teamwork”—an approach that requires dedication, hard work, commitment, and individual accountability for the collective effort. The VITA Small Agency Consolidation Strategy Team received the Teamwork Award for epitomizing collaboration, dedication, discipline, and sacrifice. The team members are:

- Chris Saneda, Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control
- Paul Casalaspi, The Library of Virginia
- Belchior Mira, Department of Human Resource Management
- Anne Wilmoth, State Compensation Board

Jean R. Jensen, Secretary of the State Board of Elections, accepted the award on behalf of the team. The State Board of Elections is the first agency to pilot the consolidation process and has worked extensively with the SACS Team to determine the model for the small agency consolidation process. Special thanks were also extended to the respective agency heads for making the SACS Team members’ service possible:

- Vern Danielson, Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control
- Nolan Yelich, The Library of Virginia
- Sara Redding Wilson, Department of Human Resource Management
- Bruce Haynes, State Compensation Board

- **“Going the Extra Mile” Partnership Award.** The “Going the Extra Mile” Award recognized the Secretariat within state government that exceeded all expectations in terms of supporting technology transformation initiatives in the Commonwealth. The Public Safety Secretariat received the award for providing executive leadership from the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, for volunteering the expertise and time of leaders from Virginia State Police and the Department of Fire Programs who assisted in the development of the model Memorandum of Agreement, and for the Secretariat’s collaborative approach to reaching agreement for the benefit of VITA. Chief Deputy Secretary of Public Safety Robert Crouch accepted the award on behalf of Secretary John Marshall.
- **Corporate Partner Award.** VITA is looking to forge innovative and mutually beneficial partnerships with a wide array of corporate partners and is working through Procurement Reform efforts to improve relationships, streamline the procurement process, and make Virginia a state with which it is easy to do business. The Corporate Partner Award is the first in a new tradition of acknowledging distinguished corporate partners who demonstrate the very best in professional ethics and expertise, and who work side-by-side with the Commonwealth, doing

whatever it takes to meet our greatest challenges and return value to our citizens. The first Corporate Partner Award was given to BearingPoint, Inc., for meeting and exceeding all service expectations, for the breadth of expertise in a consolidation effort of this magnitude, and for truly partnering with the Commonwealth to achieve the Governor's vision and legislative mandate for establishing VITA. BearingPoint Managing Director Don Parr accepted the award.

- **Agency Partner Award.** The final recognition award went to the state agency that has looked to the future, evaluated the size and complexity of its IT resources, and has seized the opportunity to partner with VITA. The result is a win-win-win situation—a win for VITA, as VITA has access to valuable resources located throughout the Commonwealth; a win for the agency, as it influences and ultimately helps shape many of the service offerings and functions of VITA; and a win for the enterprise, as the partnership promotes enterprise thinking and solutions. The Award was given to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for embracing the reform initiative to the benefit of all and for the exemplary attitude toward preparedness, strategic planning, and partnership that is a model for other agencies in the Commonwealth. Tom Bradshaw accepted the award on behalf of VDOT.

Secretary Newstrom announced and introduced the members of the VITA Leadership team at the VITA Kickoff and Employee Recognition Event, including:

- **Velma Ballard**, Director of Human Services
- **Leslie Carter**, Director of Computer Services
- **Bob Davidson**, Director of Telecommunications and Networking Services
- **Deborah Dodson**, Director of Business Systems Services
- **Chris Saneda**, Director of Customer Support Services
- **Jerry Simonoff**, Director of Strategic Management Services
- **Susan Woolley**, Director of Acquisition Services
- **Cheryl Clark**, Deputy Chief Information Officer

VITA Chief Financial Officer and Director of Financial Management Services Austin Matthews was announced on July 16th. Biographical information on the VITA leadership team can be found in Appendix 6-2 and on the VITA Web site.

Governor Warner also announced his four appointments to the Information Technology Investment Board, including:

- **Christopher G. Caine**, Vice President, Governmental Programs, International Business Machines Corporation. (IBM)
- **John C. Lee, IV**, President, Chief Executive Officer and founder of Lee Technologies.
- **James W. "Jimmy" Hazel**, Principal in Angler Companies, a real estate development firm, and former policy advisor on technology matters to Governor Warner. Appointed by Governor Allen to the Virginia Technology Council. Former president of Williams Mullen Public Affairs.
- **Dr. Mary Guy Miller**, President and founder of Interactive Design and Development, Inc. a successful, award winning multimedia design and Production Company located in Southwest Virginia.

Summer Employee Dialogue Sessions.

Approximately 700 IT employees in state government attended four sessions scheduled July 21-24 and August 4, 2003. The sessions were dedicated primarily to answering employee questions and concerns and introducing the leadership team. The questions and answers from the sessions are included in Appendix 6-1.

Web Presence

VITA established the **Road to VITA Transition Web site** in April 2003, and incorporated language and graphics to convey the collective journey to the development of VITA. The site included information on VITA transition activities and initiatives, the VITA Transition Office, employment information, specific information for agencies and employees preparing for the transition after July 2003, and relevant documents and links.



An announcement for the new site was sent to all state employees with the assistance of the Department of Human Resource Management on April 16, resulting in nearly 3,000 "hits" or visits in a single day. The chart below illustrates the usage of the Transition site between April 16, 2003, and June 30, 2003.

General Statistics		Report Range: April 16, 2003 to June 30, 2003
Hits	Entire Site (Successful)	683,299
	Average per Day	7,276
Visitors	Unique Visitors	14,563

Source: WebTrends Technical Summary



The **VITA Web site** was launched on July 1, 2003, and featured for the first time the new VITA logo. The content and functions of DIT, DTP, and the VIPNet Authority were revamped and organized in a customer-focused and –friendly template. The primary sections of the VITA Web site include:

- News and hot topics
- Information about the VITA organization (structure, values, organization chart, etc.)
- Help desk (service requests and problem solving)
- Procurement (contracts, bids, partnership opportunities, and ProReform)
- VITA service offerings
- Project Management Division
- Documents and links (policies, standards, guidelines, etc.)

General Statistics		Report Range: July 1, 2003 to July 31, 2003
Hits	Entire Site (Successful)	583,765
	Average per Day	18,831
Visitors	Unique Visitors	31,092
Most Requested Pages	VITA Homepage	21,812
	Teacher PC Purchase Program	6,978
	VITA Employment Opportunities	2,953

Source: WebTrends Technical Summary

Both the Road to VITA and the VITA Web sites used the Web templates designed by VIPNet to meet and exceed all standards for usability and access.



VITA also launched the robust employee VITAwEB Intranet site on July 1, 2003. VITAwEB is accessible only by VITA employees and contains information on agency vision and values, agency news, policies and procedures, links to VITA applications, and employment and payroll information. The Intranet also includes a comprehensive personnel directory with photographs—a feature that will be useful as VITA grows and includes employees outside of downtown Richmond.

More information about VITA's Web-related activities is available in Appendix 6-3.

Logo and Branding

Creating a new agency requires establishing a new “brand” or identity, and new collateral materials such as letterhead, business cards, and document templates. Just as the Nike “swoosh” embodies the identity of Nike and is immediately recognizable, VITA sought to portray its values and identity in its logo and slogan.

The VITA Logo

The VITA logo depicts the letters “V” and “A” in solid blue—the official “Commonwealth of Virginia” blue (Reflex Blue). The “IT” is placed in the middle, and displays VITA’s value of transparency—all operations are illuminated and IT operates like a utility—in green (PMS 369). The logo depicts IT in the state of VA as a transparent layer that helps agencies meet their business goals in serving the citizens of the Commonwealth.



The VITA Web site features a “flash logo” that incorporates animation. The purpose of the flash logo is to portray VITA’s value of People = Assets. Each quarter, four employees are included in the animation to “put a face on IT” in the Commonwealth. In the animation sequence, each individual appears until the group of four is formed. The figures are outlined in green and gradually form the outline of the letters “IT” in the logo. Once the letters are formed and filled in, the “V” and the “A” merge into the screen and slide into place to form the interesting overlapping of letters—the final VITA logo.

The featured employees for this quarter are displayed below and include (from left to right):

- Chris Saneda, Director of Customer Support Services
- Susan Woolley, Director of Acquisition Services
- Michael Treagy, Web Services Group, Recipient of a VITA Agency Star award.
- Judy Marchand, IT Manager, Strategic Development, Recipient of a VITA Agency Star award.



To view the flash logo, visit

<http://www.vita.virginia.gov/about/aboutOurLogo.cfm>

The VITA slogan

VITA’s motto is “Expect the Best” and it fits—our customers can expect the best value and support, citizens can expect the best investment on their tax dollars, and employees can expect the best career opportunities in state government. “Expect the Best” also calls for VITA employees to expect the best of each other and of themselves. This means doing our personal best every day, setting and reaching high standards, and helping our teammates do the same. It also means working to help shape VITA into the dynamic and effective organization it can be.

VITA's First Week

The first days following the creation of VITA are particularly critical to the success of the overall consolidation work underway. VITA sought to make the transition for the 360+ new employees of VITA (from DIT, DTP, and VIPNet Authority) as smooth as possible, and planned a series of activities and events to education VITA employees about VITA's values, duties and expectations, and overarching focus on service continuity. To ensure as little disruption as possible on Day One (July 1, 2003), the bulk of activities requiring employees to leave their desks were handled on or before June 30, 2003. A highlight of the week's activities follows, with more detail available in Appendix 6-4.

Monday, June 30

- **Employee Information Sessions.** Two employee information sessions were held to provide more detailed information about the transition to VITA, answer questions, and set expectations for the week of activities, culminating in the VITA Kickoff and Employee Recognition Event on July 8.
- **Security Badges.** Employees turned in their DIT, DTP, and VIPNet Authority security badges and received their new VITA security badge. Information about VITA's values was posted throughout the facility, and VITA employees were welcomed to their new agency with juices and cookies provided by the Employee Benefits Association.

Tuesday, July 1 (Day One)

- **Service continuity.** The primary focus of the day was on providing consistent services to VITA customers and responding to any problems as quickly as possible.
- **Welcome Packets.** All employees received VITA Welcome Kits on their desks when they arrived. Executive staff and volunteers greeted all employees at the entrance points to the VITA Operations Center and welcomed them to their first day as "VITAzens." The Welcome Kit included a small supply of business cards, a VITA lapel pin, and several information sheets about the VITA organization and the activities for the week. A table of contents and copies of the information sheets are available in appendix 6-5.
- **Logo Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony.** Secretary Newstrom unveiled the new VITA logo in the lobby of the VITA Operations Center.
- **Case Study: Transparency.** Each day, a case study describing each of VITA's five pillars was released through OpenDoor, an internal communications vehicle delivered through e-mail, to all employees. Copies of the OpenDoor case studies are available in Appendix 6-6.

Wednesday, July 2

- **HR Open Forum.** Two human resources open forum sessions were held to address any questions employees had concerning benefits, compensation, policies and procedures, and other HR issues.
- **Case Study: People = Assets.** A brief case study on People = Assets was released through OpenDoor.

Thursday, July 3

- **Case Study: Excellence in Service Delivery.** A brief case study on Excellence in Service Delivery was released through OpenDoor.

Monday, July 7

- **VITA T-shirts.** Employees received VITA t-shirts donated by BearingPoint, Inc. that display the VITA logo and slogan.
- **Case Study: Technology Solutions.** A brief case study on Technology Solutions was released through OpenDoor.

Tuesday, July 8

- **VITA Kickoff and Employee Recognition Event.** The VITA Kickoff Event was hosted at Kanawha Plaza, and is described in more detail previously in this section.
- **Case Study: Success Through Partnerships.** A brief case study on Success Through Partnerships was released through OpenDoor.

Notification process

VITA worked with the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) to assist agencies in notifying employees who are tentatively assigned to transfer to VITA at the time the Memorandum of Agreement is signed. As detailed in Section 3, VITA and the 74 agencies in-scope to VITA worked through an iterative process to gather Personnel Due Diligence information, analyze the data, and verify the initial mapping and mapping assignments for nearly 900 employees.

Given VITA's commitment to communicate with prospective VITA employees frequently and to make the transition as smooth as possible, VITA prepared a notification package for each agency to help them in notifying employees of their tentative assignment to VITA. With DHRM's concurrence, VITA believed it was important to let employees know as early as possible—even those employees of large agencies who may not transition for up to 18 months—of their tentative assignment to VITA.

The notification packets included the following tools and guidance:

- **Cover memo from Sara Wilson, DHRM Director.** DHRM provided suggested guidance for notifying employees and urged agencies to notify their employees as soon as possible and to encourage them to attend the Summer Employee Dialogue Sessions scheduled July 21 – 24 and August 4.
- **VITA Notification letter.** The VITA notification letter was personalized for each employee and included the VITA Directorate to which the employee is tentatively assigned. Approximately 30% of employees were notified that they were not assigned to a specific organizational unit within VITA. Employees who perform a wide range of duties can fit into a number of VITA Directorates. To ensure the fit that best complements the skills and interests of the employee with the organizational needs, individuals who are currently unassigned will receive an assignment around the time the MOA is signed with their agency.

- **Sample cover letter** that could be customized by the agency to append to the VITA notification letter.
- **Sample memo to all agency employees** that could be used at the option of the agency and customized to inform all employees that the notification of personnel tentatively assigned to VITA had occurred.

Notification packets were sent between July 15 and July 17 to all agencies who had completed the Personnel Due Diligence process. The contents of the notification packets are included in Appendix 6-7.

Looking Ahead

As VITA prepares to transition employees and resources from small, medium, and large agencies over the next 18 months, it will use the lessons learned from communications efforts to date to ensure quality, ongoing communications with its stakeholders. Projected major activities include:

- **Define and implement the communications office.** Define and implement key processes, major mile markers, roles and responsibilities, staffing, and other activities for the Communications and Public Relations Division.
- **Develop and implement reward and recognition programs.** Develop programs for rewarding employees and partners, and seek opportunities for gaining recognition for VITA through awards opportunities, press, and speaking engagements.
- **Define/refine the employee on-boarding process.** Building upon the transition activities with the central service agencies, refine the employee on-boarding process and related materials, including the welcome kit, orientation documentation, and collateral and acculturation materials.
- **Develop and implement a communications strategy** to ensure quality communications with stakeholders. Create vehicles for managing content and changes to the VITA Internet site and Intranet site.
- **Develop and embed VITA culture throughout the organization,** and create enthusiasm among employees tentatively assigned to transfer to VITA from other agencies.
- **Establish methodology for branding VITA consistently,** including tools and templates, guidance and training, and ensuring consistency and coordination of communications in terms of look, feel, tone, and content.
- **Generate positive publicity for VITA.** Share information about VITA success stories and celebrate major mile markers
- **Develop and implement marketing strategies** for new services.